



Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes

Date: Wednesday February 17, 2021

Time: 8:00 PM- 10:00 PM

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

Notice to the Public on meeting privacy In the interests of preventing abuse of videoconferencing technology (i.e. Zoom Bombing) all participants, including members of the public, wishing to engage via the Zoom App must register for each meeting and will notice multi-step authentication protocols. Please allow additional time to join the meeting. Further, members of the public who wish to participate without providing their name may still do so by registering to receive the meeting info and using the telephone dial-in information provided.

Please read Governor Baker's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provision of Open Meeting Law for more information regarding virtual public hearings and meetings:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-meeting-law-order-march-12-2020/download>

Attendees: Co-chairs Pusey and Jolin, Commissioners Rogers, Haynes, Grossman, Soneja, Brown, Bauer, Minton, Horowitz, Carney, Baron, Carey

DEI Office - Jillian Harvey, Christina Coleman

Interns: Annika Benn

APD representative: Captain Sean Kiernan

Community Members: Rebecca Gruber, Elizabeth Dray, Jo Anne Preston

Minutes

Meeting called to order at 8:00 pm by Co-chair Jolin

Land acknowledgement by Co-chair Pusey

1. Review of Minutes
 - a. Clarification of the draft minutes under Fair Action Housing Plan
 - b. The schools and education section to be revised to include the CIAA (discipline reports) and Policy and Procedure subcommittee (Indigenous Peoples Day)
 - c. *Motion to approve minutes as amended by Commissioner Soneja and seconded by Commissioner Baron, passed with unanimous approval*
2. Review of Community Input from January 2021 meeting
 - a. No input provided in January
3. Co-chair Report
 - a. Co-chairs Pusey and Jolin report on regularly scheduled meetings
 - i. monthly meeting with APD Chief Flaherty
 - ii. monthly meeting with co-chairs of the Rainbow and Disability commission
 - iii. weekly meeting with town manager Adam Chapdelaine and Arlington's DEI coordinator Jillian Harvey
 - b. Co-chairs met with Belmont, Winthrop, Gloucester, Needham's HRC's to organize and learn from neighboring HRCs
 - c. ACAC has requested to consult with the AHRC on ongoing commissioner training
4. Working Group Q&A
 - a. The schools and education working group (SEWG) clarified their intent to address APS's classification of holidays and the first day of school for the 2021-2022 schedule
 - i. SEWG supports the adjustment of the Sept 2021 school start from the second day of Rosh Hashanah to the following day to set a standard of inclusion that the first day of school not be held on a holiday
 - ii. The SEWG reports that commissioner Naoka Carey and community member Katie Sonin will be attending the school committee meetings to represent the group
 - iii. The school committee is moving forward with plans to hire an APS DEI coordinator
5. DEI Division Updates (Jillian Harvey)
 - a. Programming
 - i. Elevating Arlington, Robbins Library's Archive project has launched
 - ii. Submissions from community members of color about their experience in Arlington are now being accepted
 - iii. Community programming will include a writing workshop, poem workshop, and artist talk
 - iv. The Arlington Reads Together book was announced: "Why Are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria"
 1. The project is available on the library calendar and additional programs will launch soon (author talk, METCO talk, Speak Out Boston, Wrap up discussion sponsored by AHRC)
 - b. Training
 - i. Town employee training with the National League of Cities began in early February
 1. Subsequent sessions will include input from town employee survey

- ii. 2 sessions remain in the community teachings series
 - iii. Commission training will be planned with Town Counsel, Doug Heim
 - iv. Ethics training module to be completed yearly by all commissioners - will be provided by DEI office
 - v. DEI coordinator has completed the training to train AYCC Clinicians
- c. Fair Housing Action Plan
 - i. The Housing plan will be finalized by March 5
 - ii. 2 commissioners are needed to volunteer and review the Fair Housing Action Plan
- d. Budget
 - i. AHRC has \$4,704 left to spend for fiscal year 2021

6. Proposed Statements

- a. Myanmar Coup (Commissioner Bauer)
 - i. Proposal to release a statement about the Myanmar Coup as it directly affects Arlington residents
 - 1. Some residents in town are from Myanmar
 - 2. Students from Myanmar have studied in Arlington
 - 3. *Motion to write statement* by Commissioner Rogers and seconded by Commissioner Grossman, *passed with unanimous approval*
- b. Indian Farmers' Protest (Commissioner Soneja)
 - i. Indian government has passed discriminatory laws against the farmers of the nation and attempted to silence protestors
 - 1. A statement from the AHRC would support residents in Arlington and stop the spread of false information
 - 2. *Motion to write statement in support of protesters* (to be sent to embassy and MA representatives) by Commissioner Soneja and seconded by Commissioner Rogers, *passed with unanimous approval*
- c. Medford School renaming (Commissioner Soneja)
 - i. A Medford elementary school is currently debating to rename a school that was named after Christopher Columbus
 - 1. Proposal for the AHRC to write a statement to support and guide Medford, as Arlington has done work with Indigenous Peoples Day
 - 2. Decided it was most effective to reach out to the Medford HRC to see ways that the AHRC can help in lieu of writing an official statement
- d. Rosh Hashanah (Commissioner Grossman)
 - i. Rosh Hashanah falls on the first day of school for the 2021-2022 school year
 - 1. The commission discussed that although not all members of the Jewish faith celebrate the second day of Rosh Hashanah, by scheduling the first day of school on this day the town would be promoting exclusionary practices
 - 2. The school committee recently reconvened and voted to push the first day of school back by one day so that the first day doesn't coincide with a holiday
 - 3. *Motion to write a letter to the school committee* encouraging the reconvening of the calendar subcommittee with a focus on how the calendar reflects the town's values by Commissioner Baron and

seconded by Commissioner Brown, *passed with unanimous approval*

- e. Mayors United Against Anti-Semitism Statement from AJC and US Conference of Mayors (Commissioner Pusey)
 - i. Document is a statement against Antisemitism that a community member forwarded to AHRC with request for town manager Adam Chapdelaine to sign
 - ii. No motion to forward to Adam Chapdelaine
- f. A statement regarding the Capitol insurrection on Jan 6th was drafted/edited and posted on all AHRC media

7. Community Input

- a. Elizabeth Dray - Thanked the AHRC for all current work and asked the question, how do commissioners apply and reapply?
- b. Rebecca Gruber - has the AHRC and the APD been involved with the Feb. 15th incident? How will the AHRC be involved with the investigation?

8. Incidents

- a. Captain Kiernan of the APD: Feb. 15th incident has not been reported by the victim as an incident to the AHRC
 - i. APD will contact the AHRC if and when they get a formal complaint
- b. Commissioner Carney: January racial profiling incident - No follow up with a complaint form
- c. Commissioner Soneja: Feb. 17 incident - BLM sign is missing at Pierce Elementary School
 - i. *Motion for the AHRC to allocate funds (~\$300) to Pierce Elementary to help replace the sign by Commissioner Pusey and seconded by Commissioner Brown, passed with unanimous approval*
- d. Community email: Incident with Lexington Dealership - No formal complaint
- e. Commissioner Bauer asked if there is a public traffic stop data in correlation to race?

9. Housing (30 min)

- a. The housing working group (HWG) met and would like to begin working within the community to educate and inform Arlington residents about their work
- b. Discussion whether the HWG and the work from members of Envision Arlington should be collaborative
 - i. Members of Envision Arlington are focused on systemic factors
 - ii. HWG focused on broader issues of discrimination within housing (ageism, disability, mental health, sexuality/gender)
 - iii. The events working group (EWG) has been organizing a virtual housing series since the summer of 2020
 - 1. Members of Envision Arlington inquired about a possible partnership with the AHRC on these events
 - 2. The events will take place monthly and will be education based about different aspects of housing
 - iv. Commissioner Haynes requested information about the HWG to see how

- the working group could contribute to these events
- v. Decided that one/some of the upcoming events will be around discrimination and will partner with the HWG
 - 1. Future events will focus on the systemic issues partnering with members of Envision Arlington

10. Announcements (5 min)

- a. Commissioner Bauer attended MA HRC meeting, suggests inviting neighboring HRC members to AHRC meetings
- b. Commissioner Grossman and Bauer had a successful coffee chat this month. Discussions on Prince Hall Day Warrant articles, Indigenous Peoples Day and discipline, and questions about the APD and Jan. 6 Insurrection
- c. March Incident Handling will be recorded by Co-chair Pusey
- d. Next Coffee Chat will be with Co-chair Pusey and Commissioner Rogers
- e. Next meeting: March 17, 2020, 8:00 pm, Remote Participation

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Carey, *passed with unanimous approval*